

# **ALEXANDRIA AD HOC CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES**

**Thursday, March 24, 2016**  
Sister Cities Conference Room  
City Hall, 301 King St.  
7:00 p.m.

**Present:**

George Foote, Chair  
Jennifer Atkins  
Al Pierce  
Herve Aitken  
Randy Sengel  
Frank Shafroth  
Lynnwood Campbell  
Mark Abramson  
Deb Roepke (via phone)

**Staff:**

Noraine Buttar, Special Assistant, CMO  
Meghan Roberts, Assistant City Attorney  
Jean Kelleher, Director, Human Rights

1. Chair Foote called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Ms. Roberts explained the steps prescribed by the Virginia Code to allow Ms. Roepke to participate via phone. A physically assembled quorum was present. Everyone could hear Ms. Roepke's voice via phone. Ms. Roepke had notified Mr. Foote that she would be unable to make the meeting on the day before the meeting. Ms. Roepke was visiting family in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The members voted unanimously to approve Ms. Roepke's participation via phone and she joined the meeting.
3. The minutes of the March 10 and March 17 meeting were approved by consensus.
4. The committee discussed the idea of delivering more than a code of conduct and ethics pledge. In accordance with City Council Resolution 2707, the committee agreed to deliver the text of a code of conduct and ethics pledge as well as a report with comments on best practices and any recommendations drawn from the reports of the Commission on Integrity.
5. The group had a general discussion about whether to ask the Mayor and Council for more time to complete the deliverables. Some members felt more time could be usefully applied. Mr. Abramson suggested the group revisit the question after they've determined how much work they've completed and what's left to do. He interpreted the mandate as narrow, asking for three products, (1) code of conduct; (2) ethics pledge; (3) committee report with recommendations and best practices. Ms. Atkins agreed and felt the group has been productive and shouldn't go beyond what was asked of them. Mr. Shafroth suggested that the group end on time, and asked that Council provide an assessment after

a period of time to the Committee, describing what worked and what didn't regarding the Committee's recommendations to Council. Members acknowledged that the Committee will go out of existence and that any future participation would require further action by Council. Members agreed not to request an extension and decided to conduct longer meetings in order to complete the Committee's work.

6. There was a general discussion about conflict of interest rules. After discussion of objective standards currently in law, the Committee confirmed that its goal is not to recommend legislative changes or compliance-based systems, rather it sought to help avoid conflicts of interest by officials and to adopt values-based principles. Mr. Pierce said that not all conflicts of interest necessarily involve money. Mr. Sengel thought the answer to the issue was to rely on common sense and the good judgment of officials.
7. Members revised Ms. Atkins and Mr. Aitken's draft (which had been revised by Ms. Roepke). The Committee discussed making a recommendation that Council adopt a resolution inviting the group back in some form and at some future date to provide input about the effect of adoption of the Committee's recommendations.
8. Members will continue to work on language of the code and pledge and consider report items at the next meeting on March 31. The Committee agreed to meet at 6PM on that date.
9. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.